

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Amended) A steel wheel comprising:

a spin-formed disc portion; and

a spin-formed rim portion substantially contiguous with said disc portion wherein said wheel is of substantially unitary construction, said rim portion further comprising a tapered bead seat contiguous with said rim portion and having about a 5° taper, and a second bead-seat .
2. (Original) The steel wheel of claim 1, further comprising a gutter portion which is substantially contiguous with said rim portion.
3. (Previously Amended) The steel wheel of claim 1, further comprising a well portion, which is substantially contiguous with said rim portion.
4. (Cancelled) ~~The steel wheel of claim 1, further comprising a taper bead seat portion, which is substantially contiguous with, said rim portion.~~
5. (Cancelled) ~~The steel wheel of claim 4, wherein said taper bead seat has about a 5° taper.~~

6. (Previously Amended) The steel wheel of claim 1, wherein said wheel is of a flat base or semi-drop center type.

7. (Previously Amended) The steel wheel of claim 1, further comprising a flange portion, which is substantially contiguous with said rim portion.

8. (Original) The steel wheel of claim 1, wherein said disc portion has a center opening therethrough.

9. (Original) The steel wheel of claim 1, wherein said disc portion has at least one mounting opening the therethrough.

10. (Original) The steel wheel of claim 1, wherein said disc portion has at least one vent opening therethrough.

11. (Original) The steel wheel of claim 1, wherein said disc portion has at least one valve opening therethrough.

12. (Cancelled) ~~The steel wheel of claim 1, substantially mounted to a vehicle.~~

13. (Cancelled) ~~The steel wheel of claim 1, further comprising a tire substantially mounted to said wheel.~~

14. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a steel wheel comprising the steps of:

spin-forming a disc portion; and

spin-forming a rim portion wherein said rim portion is substantially contiguous with said disc portion and wherein said wheel is of substantially unitary construction;

forming a first bead seat portion and a second tapered bead-seat portion, wherein said taper bead-seat portion is substantially contiguous with said rim portion, said ~~taper~~ tapered bead-seat being formed with about a 5° taper.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14, wherein said wheel is formed from steel stock of substantially uniform thickness.

16. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of forming a gutter portion, wherein said gutter portion is substantially contiguous with said rim portion.

17. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of forming a well portion, wherein said well portion is substantially contiguous with said rim portion.

18. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of forming a flange portion, wherein said flange portion is substantially contiguous with said rim portion.

19. (Cancelled) ~~The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of forming a taper bead seat portion, wherein said taper bead seat portion is substantially contiguous with said rim portion.~~

20. (Cancelled) ~~The method of claim 17, wherein said taper bead seat is formed with about a 5° taper.~~

21. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein said wheel is formed with a flat or semi-drop center.

22. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of forming a center opening in said disc portion.

23. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of forming at least one mounting opening in said disc portion.

24. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of forming at least one vent opening in said disc portion.

25. (Original) The method of claim 14, further comprising the step of forming at least one valve opening in said disc portion.

26. (Cancelled) ~~The method of claim 14, wherein said forming steps comprise at least one of spinning and/or flow forming processes.~~

27. (Cancelled) ~~The method of claim 14, wherein said method utilizes a spinning machine.~~

28. (Cancelled) ~~A steel wheel of unitary construction produced in accordance with the method of claim 14.~~

29. (Previously Amended) A method of manufacturing a unitary steel wheel rim and disc assembly for 5 ° taper bead-seat of flat base or semi-drop center rims of the type having an integral disc and rim portion with gutter, well, 5 ° bead-seat and fixed flange wherein the said method comprises the following steps

a. Providing a generally circular blank the blank having a pre-determined uniform thickness and a center hole pierced to a predetermined size;

b. Preforming the blank to predetermined shape and size, the preform blank is spun and flow formed in a CNC spinning machine, being positioned between a inner mandrel and clamping plate, such mandrel having a outboard surface of predetermined cylindrical shape confirming to predetermined cylindrical shape and profile of the rim gutter, well and fixed flange;

c. Further spinforming in a CNC spinning machine the spun and flow formed preform to reduce thickness and consequently to increase the width to a predetermined size while maintaining a predetermined inner diameter;

d. Further spinforming in a CNC spinning machine, the spin preform to displace the preform cylindrical peripheral portion, against an outboard surface of an inner mandrel to form a well, first bead seat, and second tapered bead sea, gutter well, and fixed flange; and

e. Further spinforming the preform, the perform being positioned between an outer mandrel and an inner clamping plate, the outer mandrel comprising inboard surface which conforms to a desired final shape of the fixed flange and the second tapered bead-seat, the preform being spun and flow formed against the inner surface of the outer mandrel by a shaping roller of predetermined shape to form the final shape of the fixed flange and 5° bead seat.

30. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 29 wherein spin forming the peripheral and inner portion of the blank by engaging the blank with a forming roller so as to obtain controlled thickness reduction and shape in the peripheral and inner portion of the blank.

31. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 29 wherein the material is displaced towards the axis of rotation during spinning a portion of the preform peripheral cylindrical portion against the outboard surface of an outwardly positioned roll to form the final shape of the rim gutter.

32. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 29 wherein spin forming an section of the blank peripheral portion by engaging the blank with a forming roller to form the final shape of the well base shape and dimension and at least a portion of the bead seat.

33. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 29 wherein spin forming the

bead seat portion of the blank outboard section against the shaping surface of the outer mandrel to form the final shape of bead seat and fixed flange.

34. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 29 wherein: said step of preforming the blank ~~step~~ consists a plurality of passes of the forming roller.

35. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 29 wherein after first step of spinning operation bolt holes are pierced in a press.

36. (Currently Amended) The method as claimed in claim 29 wherein after piercing the bolt holes, vent holes are pierced in a press.

37. (Previously Amended) The method as claimed in claim 29 wherein said step (a) consists the step of providing a disc blank of substantially uniform thickness of low carbon steel or HSLA steel composition.

38. (Cancelled) ~~The method as claimed in claim 27 wherein a butt welded hoop of predetermined diameter, width and thickness can also be used instead of a blank.~~

39. (Cancelled) ~~The method as claimed in claim 36 wherein the butt welded hoop of predetermined diameter, width and thickness can also be used to manufacture the rim part alone.~~

40. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for manufacturing a integral unitary steel wheel

rim and disc assembly for 5° taper bead-seat of flat base or semi-drop center rims of the type having an integral disc and rim portion with gutter, well-base, bead-seat and fixed flange, wherein the said method comprises

means for providing a generally circular blank

means for forming the blank to of pre-determined uniform thickness, the blank is having a center hole pierced to a predetermined size,

means for spin-forming the blank to form a pre-form, said means positioning said pre-form between a mandrel having a surface which conforms to a final shape of a desired rim gutter, well, fixed flange, 5° taper bead seat and a second bead seat, and a clamping plate, wherein the pre-form is spun and flow formed against the surface of the mandrel to form the final shapes of the rim gutter, well, fixed flange, 5° taper bead seat and second bead seat.

41. (Cancelled) ~~Apparatus for manufacturing a integral steel wheel rim and disc assembly for 5° taper bead seat of flat base or semi drop center rims for a vehicle having an integral disc and rim portion with gutter, well base, bead seat and fixed flange manufactured by the process claimed in claim 1.~~

42. (Cancelled) ~~A integral steel wheel rim and disc assembly for 5° taper bead seat of flat base or semi drop center rims for a vehicle having an integral disc and rim portion with gutter, well base, bead seat and fixed flange wherein when spin forming machine is programmed to form different shapes.~~

43. (Cancelled) ~~A method of manufacturing a integral steel wheel rim and disc assembly~~

~~for 5° taper bead seat of flat base or semi-drop center rims for a vehicle having an integral disc and rim portion with gutter, well base, bead seat and fixed flange as described in the description of complete specification and as illustrated by way of drawings accompanying the complete specification.~~

44. (Cancelled) ~~A integral steel wheel rim and disc assembly for 5 degree taper bead seat of flat base or semi drop center rims for a vehicle having an integral disc and rim portion with gutter, well base, bead seat and fixed flange as described in the description of complete specification and as illustrated by way of drawings accompanying the complete specification.~~

45. (Previously Amended) An apparatus for manufacturing from a steel blank a steel wheel of substantially unitary construction comprising a disc portion and a rim portion, said apparatus comprising:

- a. a frame;
- b. a rotating component which is substantially rotatably affixed to said frame and which rotates said blank;
- c. a clamping component which maintains said steel blank in a substantially fixed position relative to said rotating component; and
- d. a forming component, wherein said forming component substantially forms said disc and rim portions into said steel wheel of unitary construction from said steel blank, said forming component forming a first tire bead seat into said rim portion of said unitary wheel, said first tire seat bead having approximately a 5° angle, said forming component further forming a second bead seat into said rim portion of said unitary wheel.

46. (Original) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein, said forming component forms a well into said rim portion of said unitary wheel.

47. (Original) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein, said forming component forms a gutter into said rim portion of said unitary wheel.

48. (Cancelled) ~~The apparatus of claim 45, wherein, said forming component forms a tire bead seat into said rim portion of said unitary wheel.~~

49. (Cancelled) ~~The apparatus of claim 48, wherein, said forming component forms a tire seat bead having approximately a 5° angle.~~

50. (Original) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein, said forming component forms a flange into said rim portion of said unitary wheel.

51. (Original) The apparatus of claim 45, wherein, said forming component forms a unitary wheel having a flat or semi-drop center rim.